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Appleyard College "Look at Me"

Cold Current

There are some records that are so nakedly personal that you feel uncomfortable, almost embarrassed, to listen to, while there are others that you can embrace more closely. They say things you not only can understand, but can feel. You've been there. Luigi Porto, aka Appleyard College, is nakedly honest, and not afraid to be completely vulnerable; "Look At Me" is a simple chronicle of love and innocence lost, with wisdom gained and barely held onto.

Acoustic droning and strings, along with folk and electronic touches drive this gentle record. The mood is the engine here, as many of the songs are instrumental, yet the message is never obscure. The feel of awkward awakening, of the mysterious if not maddening rituals of love and friendship is palpable. "Twice or Our Abandon Twice, the three part "Look at Me," and "Happy Ending Or The Dawn Waltz" are staggering in the ways they pack emotional punches with the lightest of touches. This is no melancholic, self-absorbed drone, however. Light doesn't always mean precious, and Porto's quiet moments idle with depth, waiting for the next, and deeper, peak into the moment.

"Look At Me" is a stunning record, both for its emotional candor and its evocative feel. Luigi Porto/Appleyard College shares universal themes in such an authentic, approachable way, that you do feel less lonely listening to this. You may also feel like being alone too, to hear what sound your own lessons make. 8/10 -- *Mike Wood* (19 May, 2009)

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